

Cal Hoskins Capitulates

Taming of a Son-in-law by an Old Mountain Woman.

By FRANKLIN P. HARRY

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"Aw, Mis' Myers—Mis' Myers!" a shrill, anxious feminine voice called. "Be th' klars up er down?"

Mrs. Myers looked up from the pin of apples she was paring and inclined her head aside to escape the vines on the porch in an endeavor to see who called.

"Why, howdy, Mis' Miracle! They jus' went up about quarter an' hour ago. Light from your saddle an' stay awhile," she invited cordially.

"No'm, I can't. I'm jes' so worried in my mind! Lowsey's man ain't been home for two days. He's around town someers chock full of whisky, an' Lowsey's got no wood out, an' the garden needs diggin', an' she's as mad as hops, an' the baby's sick, an' she can't git down after him," she clattered in a breath.

The visitor seemed torn between a desire to hasten away and to stay and unburden her troubled soul. Clad in a faded calico wrapper, tied in place by a gingham apron, her thin, sharp features half concealed by a dapping sunbonnet, she sat resolutely upon a flea bitten, lanky old mule, who seemed suffering from the last stages of emut.

"Yes," she resumed, "Cal's been gone two days—he's that triffin'—an' one of the Simpson boys back up the road a piece told me he was shootin' his lip off about Buck Haney. Him and Buck's had no good blood for each other ever sence Cal married my Lowsey. One of these days he'll git drunk an' run into Buck, an' there'll be trouble, sure 'nuf."

"Oh, Mis' Miracle!" Mrs. Myers cried, agitated. "I seen Buck Haney go past byer this mawnin', an' he'd been drinkin'—sure you're born. You'd better come in," she begged.

"Giddap, Jonah!" Mrs. Miracle addressed the languid mule excitedly.

"Mebbe I kin find him before Buck lays sight on him," she called over her shoulder. "Men are alius sich fools when they're drunk—shootin' each other to pieces. Yuh said th' klars went up, didn't yuh?"

"Yes!" Mrs. Myers screamed. "Be awful careful!"

With many tugs at the long suffering bridle and many high voiced ejaculations of disgust at the mule's slowness, the pair finally got across and disappeared in a rising cloud of dust.



MECHANICALLY HIS HANDS WENT UP.

The first house of the straggling little village belonged to Buck Haney. It sat some distance back from the main road, a crooked, gully washed lane leading up to it.

As Mrs. Miracle and the mule approached from one side a thick set, disheveled man lurched toward it from the other.

"Howdy, ole woman!" he cried, as he completed his circuitous course and landed unsteadily in front of her, treating her incidentally to a genial, bleary eyed grin. "Where ye started at?"

"I'm fur's as I'm goin'. You git right ready to go back with me, Cal Hoskins," she said aggressively. "You now Lowsey needs you home, an' a garden's runnin' wild, an'—"

"Wait! I'm through with Buck aney fust!" he cried in thick tongue-tied, fumbling in his pockets mechanically.

At last he found his gun and, pointing it waveringly above his head, fired a shot or two, accompanied by numerous blatant, raucous invitations to Buck to "come out hyer, I kin lick th' hide ofen yuh!"

"You shet your mouth, right now!" Mrs. Miracle hissed.

She leaned over as she spoke and dexterously snatched the pistol from his wabbling grasp. She tucked it somewhere amid the voluminous calico and turned to him once more, unfastening as she did so a businesslike looking whip from beneath her apron.

"You shet your mouth," she repeated, "an' go 'long home!"

Each seemed to be measuring the strength of the other. For a full half minute they stood thus. Then a belting voice from behind them broke the tension.

"Yow! Who's-a-callin' Buck Haney, I'd like f' know!"

A second unsteady figure was approaching, this time by the rain gulled

"Where'd y' throw that gun?" Cal whispered hoarsely to his mother-in-law, who was doing her best to hide the whip.

"Shet up!" she admonished tersely. "Who's-a-goin' a lick th' hide ofen me? You—yuh pizen faced varmint!" Buck asked, casting a withering, leering look of contempt at Hoskins. "Stand out thar tell I put a 44 in yer hide!" he ordered.

"That's enough outen you!" Mrs. Miracle's voice had an unpleasant, acidulous rasp in it when she became thoroughly angry. She sprang from the mule and advanced upon him, Cal's nasty looking revolver in her hand.

He was too astonished as the barrel of it neared him to reach for his own gun at first, and when he thought of it she anticipated the movement.

"No, y' don't, nuther! Stick your paws up, an' don't go grabbin' for your gun. I'll do hit!"

Mechanically his hands went up.

"Turn aroun', I say!"

Slowly he turned, still keeping his hands up, and when his back was opposite her she deftly drew his gun from his hip pocket. The mule stood still, an interested spectator, and, going back to him, she led him to the fence and climbed upon his back.

"Now, yuh all calkate on chawin' each other up, don't yuh?" she asked coldly, forcing the mule over toward the two.

They looked sheepish and amiable and drunk, but not a thing like fighting.

Scorn leaped into her eyes and colored her weather beaten features. She advanced upon them as swiftly as she could make the mule go, the upraised whip writhing in snaky circles above her head.

"Air ye goin' to fight?" she demanded.

The culprits looked decidedly agitated. "How could they possibly be so misunderstood? And fight—without a gun? What business had a woman mixing in with a man's business anyway?"

Mrs. Miracle was running things, and she didn't hesitate to let them see it either. Her next words were to the point.

"You all's been a shootin' your mouths off about each other 'long 'nuf," she told them. "Now's your chance to claw an' scratch to your hearts' content. You all mix right in now, an' I'll see th' yuh play fair!"

The whip cracked and sung about them, its whistled alighting occasionally with a tantalizing zip.

Finding there seemed to be no alternative, Cal advanced upon Buck and tapped him playfully upon the shoulder. Buck after a clumsy pass returned in kind. Then they backed away and regarded each other fondly.

"Keep on," she encouraged. "Oal says he kin lick th' hide ofen yuh. A body dassent say thet to me and me take hit!" she said scornfully.

Turning to her son-in-law, she reminded him. "Buck called you a pizen face. Air ye afraid of him?" she asked wrathfully.

"Keep on! Keep on!" and the whip swished an echo.

Thus stimulated, once more they exchanged blows, and, owing to a rolling stone beneath his foot, Buck slipped, and his fist landed squarely and with considerable force in the middle of Lowsey's man's countenance.

That injected the required ginger into Cal, who rewarded it with a terrific old time "open hander" beside the other's head that cracked with the delivery. Then, of their own accord, they went to it. Mrs. Miracle nodded approval.

There was much language used—terse, descriptive, noncomplimentary—but that was only to be expected. Their stern monitor sat above them on the mule, the varying stages of the battle successively written upon her sharp, sun yellowed features.

Now stern disapproval as the action lagged or a whiskey clouded brain directed an unusually clumsy blow. Now a quick flashing smile of approbation as a toll hardened paw of a hand landed a good one upon the other's face or body.

Cal succeeded in planting one in Buck's ribs that called forth a pensive grunt, and the next instant tried dizzily to dodge a like one coming in his direction. He was partly successful, but the blow, sliding beneath his arm, threw the two men together, whereupon they immediately forgot their mutual grievances, threw their arms about each other's necks and became as loving brothers.

Swish, swish! The whip hissed through the air above their heads and alighted in stinging semicircles across their backs and shoulders.

Both men were in their shirt sleeves, and the rawhide bit through the cotton. It did not require many such applications to break the fraternal embrace.

"Stop thet!" she screamed angrily. "This ain't no love feast."

Again the whip sang and cracked above them.

"Hit him, Buck. He says there ain't no man hereabout kin lick him!"

Then to Cal: "Ef you don't whup him I'll—I'll tell Lowsey. Thet'll be sumpen else fer you to answer to her fer!"

The sobbing ceased with a gulp, and once more they went to it.

Once the patient, long suffering mule supported the pair until they regained their equilibrium. Sometimes they fell one upon another, but there was always ready watchful sympathy for the under dog, and when it fell the top one was usually anxious to get off.

She would not let them rest for a minute, not believing or perhaps never having heard of fighting by rounds. She liked a continuous performance and held them strictly to it.

Their faces became unrecognizable with sweat and dust, and occasionally a redder streak showed when the skin became broken. It was a pummeling, a grand scratch, a wrestling match and a bombardment of choice profanity all rolled into one.

At last the struggle began to show upon them. As they weakened and as the whiskey wore off they began to develop a certain watchfulness. It was skill—climby perhaps—but skill nevertheless, and when the work got the better of brute strength the lone spectator's interest heightened.

It may have been partly skill or accident or luck, but in one of these feints Buck got through Cal's guard

and a blow that, catching him on the point of the chin, landed him, half dreaming, upon his back by the roadside. Buck immediately prepared to jump upon him with both feet.

"You let him be!" the mother-in-law cried fiercely. "You give him a chanst to git up. You'll be thar yourself afore you know hit!"

Grimly she stood guard until the stricken man squirmed up on his elbow, and then she administered a tongue lashing until he staggered dizzily to his feet.

When his vision became clear it was of his own volition he went back into the mill.

Except to see that they met her ideas of fair play, Mrs. Miracle let them fight, once they were in earnest, until they had fought their grudge out, and long after that until they felt they had licked each other to their complete satisfaction.

Even then it was much harder to terminate the fight than to start it; but here, again, the whip came into play, and reluctantly they separated.

"Now, Buck Haney," she said, and her tone was menacing, "you git up to that house fas' as yuh kin go! Don't give me none of your sass nuther," she interrupted him as he seemed about to speak.

Thoroughly sobered, though somewhat bewildered, he passed through the gate and up the rocky, uneven lane. She assured herself that he was really gone before she turned to Cal.

"Now you hoof it for home," she hissed. He merely glared at her stubbornly and turned in the opposite direction.

Was she to lose out, after all? Was she to go back to Lowsey with the humiliating knowledge that she had failed?

Heretofore their quarrels had not been her quarrels, but now that she was into it her mountain blood urged her to win or die.

The mule seemed to be in sympathy with her for once, for he spurred along until she overtook him, and, though he had begun to run, the lash descended and struck squarely.

Whatever opposition was in his mind faded with that one blow. Before she could administer another he was headed homeward and outdodging the mule.

"You'll fin' th' rake an' hoe side o' th' stable door," she called after him, "an' th' ax' at th' wood pile!"

He made no sign save perhaps to accelerate his speed. Mrs. Myers was still on the porch when he passed. She noted his bruised countenance and the sleeve torn from his shirt.

Then a voice, timid, anxious, hailed her from beyond the railroad track, and she turned to see.

It was only an angular, sharp featured old mountain woman upon a scowling mule.

"Mis' Myers," she called, "Mis' Myers, be th' klars up er down?"

Fully Explained.

In these days of initiative, referendum and recalls it is interesting to note the explanation given by a well known politician in a hotel lobby.

"Mr. Man goes home and announces that he is going downtown after supper to meet a friend. That's the initiative. The wife of the house says, 'Are you?' in that ascending voice which seems to walk over the roof of her nerves. That's the referendum. Then Mr. Man sits down and reads his paper. That's the recall. And that's all there is to it. Understand it now, don't you? Just as easy and simple as two and two are four."—Columbus Dispatch.

The Polonzo Arrow.

An arrow studded with the most costly of stones, tipped at both ends with pure virgin gold and headed with the feathers of the rarest birds. Such is the description given of the "Polonzo arrow," which in 1494 was presented to Sir John Dalcourt by a Spanish gentleman. This wonderful arrow was made in 1204 by an ancestor of the Spaniards, and every stone and jewel with which it was set was said to represent a human life cut short through its instrumentality. The stones indicated the number of men to whom it had carried death, while the curiously fashioned—gold and silver jewels represented the women who had fallen under its poisoned point.

Joys of Hope Deferred.

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," says the proverb; but, said Mr. Glimmerton, "I have never struck me that way. If I could have all my hopes fulfilled I feel that I should be dull and logy, satiated, without interest, but with hope deferred I have always something to look forward to. And action has proved less joyous than anticipation? Why, certainly. We may find success when we reach it but an empty shell and laugh to think that we had struggled for it so eagerly. Hope's the thing."

"Let me have my hopes, or at least some of them, deferred. I like the picture."—New York Sun.

Limited Repertory.

Uncle Shadrach had held down the job of pumping the organ in his church for a score of years. A new organist had come, and a member of the church asked Uncle Shadrach what he thought of the newcomer.

"Well, sah," answered Uncle Shadrach, "Ah doan want to brag, but Ah can pump mo' pieces 'n he kin play, sah!"—New York Post.

The Arctic Sea Cow.

The arctic sea cow, an enormous kind of walrus, used to herd in large numbers on Bering island. But in 1742 it was discovered by a passing ship and hunted with harpoons. Other ships arrived after this, and the startled sea monsters were pursued and speared with such persistence that in thirty-eight years there was not one left.

Lacenic.

Jimmy doesn't waste any words. He was driving a visitor across the common a few evenings ago when they saw a cart lying among the gorse with a broken shaft. The visitor asked him what had happened to it.

"Met another one," he replied.

"Oh, but—"

"Saturday night!" he interrupted.—Manchester Guardian.

Trivial Annoyances.

It is surprising how trivial are the annoyances which suffice to make some men miserable. A lump of soap falling on a man's chin, a beefsteak overdone, losing a railway train by forty seconds after running himself out of breath, a visit from a bore when he is overwhelmed with cares, the rasping of his nerves by a hand organ when he is weary, inclined to headache or trying to sleep; even the want of a pin or a shirt button flying off at an unlucky moment, as when he is dressing for a dinner party and has scant time in which to do it—all these are annoyances which sorely try a man's patience and chafe and vex many a person more than a serious misfortune. Alexander Smith goes so far as to say that if during thirty years all the annoyances connected with defalcating shirt buttons alone could be gathered into a mass and endured at once it would be misery endured to a public execution.—New York Telegram.

Water and Pure Water.

Pure water is nothing more or less than a chemical curiosity. Even when distilled it cannot rightly be considered perfectly pure. Mineral matter is the most common foreign substance found in "Adam's ale." This is largely owing to the fact that all water passes through rock and soil at some time or other. In moderate quantities these mineral salts are quite desirable, as they are particularly needed for our bones and muscles. When water is distilled these mineral substances become detached; hence distilled water is useless for drinking. But if more than a hundred grains of such salts as magnesium or sodium sulphate are contained in a gallon of water it should then be regarded as a mineral beverage rather than a good drinking material. The importance of water can be well realized when we consider that the very elasticity of our muscles, cartilages and tendons is due to the amount of water that these tissues contain.—Pearson's.

Do Champion Athletes Die Young?

From opinions collected from men prominent in the athletic world, among them several doctors and surgeons who have given the subject special study, it may be concluded that the average man can play baseball, tennis and basketball with safety until he is forty. After that age these more vigorous games become a little dangerous, even to the man in good physical condition. At forty-five, most of the experts agree, golf, croquet, handball, volleyball and medicine ball are more fitting and, certainly, safer pastimes. The United States public health service discommends some of the more violent forms of sport, such as rowing, for instance, even for young men. Long distance running, jumping and pole vaulting also are considered extremely exhausting by its experts. It declares, in short, that "champion athletes die young."—Boston Herald.

A Short Lived Island.

In 1867 a new shoal was discovered in the group of the Tonga or Friendly Islands. In 1877 smoke was seen over the shoal. In 1885 the shoal had become a volcanic island more than two miles long and 240 feet high, and a fierce eruption was taking place with it. In 1886 the island had begun to shrink in dimensions. In 1889 its height had diminished one-half, and the ocean close around it was more than a mile deep. In 1892 the island rose only about twenty-six feet above sea level, and in 1898, under the action of the waves, its complete disappearance was reported.

The Safety First Critic.

"Brown is a very careful critic, isn't he?"

"In what way?"

"He always manages to take the sting out of his unfavorable comment."

"For instance?"

"His bride made him a shortcake the other day, and when she asked him how he liked it he replied, 'It isn't as good as your mother used to make.'"

—Detroit Free Press.

Birds and Lightning.

Birds are sometimes struck by lightning. Darwin records the case of a wild duck that he saw struck by a bolt while flying. It was killed instantly and fell to the ground. But birds seem to know instinctively that lightning is to be feared. That perhaps is why they seek shelter in thunderstorms. The sudden disappearance of the birds is, indeed, in the country one of the surest signs of an approaching tempest.

Italics.

Italics are letters formed after the Roman model, but sloping toward the right, used to emphasize words or sentences. They were first used about 1500 A. D. by Manutius, a Venetian printer, who dedicated them to the Italian states; hence the name.

Just the Man.

First Artist—Well, old chap, how is business? Second Artist—Oh, splendid! Got a commission this morning from a millionaire. Wants his wife and children painted very badly. First Artist—Well, you're the very man to do that.—Exchange.

Rather.

"I don't believe the woman who has the next apartment to ours ever touches her parlor carpet."

"My dear, that's a sweeping arraignment."—Baltimore American.

It is better to believe that a man does possess good qualities than to assert that he does not.—Chinese Maxim.

Marriage and Mathematics.

"Yes," said the old mathematician, with a gleam in his eyes, "I've always looked at it that way. Marriage is addition; when the little ones come it's multiplication; when dissension looms up to cloud the horizon of their happiness it's division, and when the final parting comes it's subtraction!"

"And how about divorce?" asked the listener.

"Oh, that would come under the denomination of fractions!"—London Telegraph.

Mere Man

Story of the Wooing of the Fair Miss Mae Pope.

By FANNIE HURST

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With exquisite precision Miss Mae Pope—Mae, please—feasted on a yellow silk scarf, fringe edged, over one corner of the parlor mantelpiece. A bisque shepherd fastened the drape in place and smiled down the length of his shaft at a bisque shepherdess who leaned across a bisque railing and returned the identical smile.

Between the two a gilt framed photograph of Miss Mae Pope, taken at the age of fifteen, held center place. Accurately posed in a white frock and communion veil, her figure was the erect result of a rigid vertebra and a photographer's brace.

Miss Pope took up the gilt frame, breathed upon its face, polished the glass protection and replaced it upon its lace mat.

"Maw," she called, "ain't you done with them supper dishes yet?"

Almost immediately Mrs. Pope appeared between the portieres, wiping her moist pink hands on a towel.

"Say, what do you think this here is, the Waldorf-Astoria? If you're in such a hurry why don't you come out and cut your own ham and slice your own bread?"

"Fer land's sake, maw, I ain't deef!"

"The sandwiches is ready," she retorted irrelevantly enough, "and the glasses and root beer is on the tray. In my day girls didn't set up to their young men this away."

"When I keep company with a gentleman friend like Mr. Sarpy you ain't got no kick coming."

"I ain't sayin' nothin' 'til I've seen him. Men are a deevilin' lot. You can't tell nothin' about 'em."

"Ain't I told you three times, maw, that he's been in the gents' furnishing four months? Virginia Tompkins used to know him when he was in the white goods over at Treacy's. He's the goods all right."

"Huh!" said Mrs. Pope. "He ain't set up to another girl on the floor but me?"

"That fer all you know."

"If it wasn't that I was put over on the book sale, I never would even have seen him. He's the smart kind, he is. There ain't a noon hour he don't come over to the books and read around."

"Then what's he settin' up to you fer?" Mrs. Pope sniffed suspiciously. "You ain't nothin' in the book line."

"I can't keep a fellow from getting stuck on me, can I?" Miss Pope lowered her eyes.

"Sixty-seven dollars ain't bad money," assented the mother.

"Sixty-seven fifty," corrected her daughter.

"Just gimme one look at him an' I'll know more about him 'n you and Virginia Tompkins together."

"Fer land's sake, maw, don't forget what to say when I make you acquainted."

Mrs. Pope glanced at her daughter with intent to wither. "I knew man-

ners before you was born," she replied.

"Maw"—Miss Pope bent forward on the divan, the dawn of an inspiration flushed her face—"where's them books Effie's boss gave her after the Sixth avenue store fire?"

"Out proppin' up the kitchen table leg so it won't wobble. Watcher want?"

A flash of red kimono and Miss Pope disappeared. Almost immediately she returned with three small volumes in the curve of her arm, a yellow and slightly damaged by fire copy of Owen Meredith's "Lucille," an old edition of "Thelma," and a brown bound "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table." She stacked them symmetrically on the center table.

"These books look fine," she cried. A clock struck the half hour.

"Looky," cried Miss Pope, "it's time to dress."

"Be sure and sling fer him, Mae."

"If I don't hurry and get dressed I'll look like a rag, I will."

Two hours later Miss Pope reappeared through the bead portieres. There was a pink spot on each cheek and a perky pink bow in her hair and at her throat. Her brief sleeves terminated at the elbows in pink rosettes.

Mr. Sarpy rose from his three legged chair in great haste and much embarrassment.

"Good evening, Miss Pope."

His hair fitted his head like a yellow oilskin cap, and his complexion

was correspondingly fair. When Mr. Sarpy shaved it was as mainly pastime rather than hirsute necessity.

"How d'ye do, Mr. Sarpy?" They shook hands.

"Ain't this a pleasant evenin'?"

"It is that," agreed Mr. Sarpy. Miss Pope smoothed her white dress until it clung to her like an ephod of grace and crossed her feet daintily. Her companion let his hands hang over his knees and busied himself yanking his neck about his small tail collar.

"I didn't see you when I left the store, Mr. Sarpy."

"Indeed, I was in the vicinity of the shirts all day."

"By the way, you ain't never met maw, have you?"

"Beg pardon?"

"I say, you ain't never met maw, have you?"

"No, no, I never had the pleasure."

Mr. Sarpy's neck darted uneasily again. "Well, what-a you know about that, and I been talkin' about you ever sence I got the book shift! I'll call her this minute."

Mr. Sarpy half raised himself from the divan.

"Please don't let me disturb"—he began, but Miss Pope had pronounced, light as breeze between the portieres that pattered like rain.

"Oh, maw!" Her voice came back to him like a bell. "Oh, maw, dear, would you stop reachin' long enough to step into the parlor and meet Mr. Sarpy?"

Mrs. Pope laid aside a large woolen arrangement she was knitting and rose stiffly from her chair. Her spotted silk dress rustled.

In that brief moment Miss Pope straightened the maternal neckband, whispered a final admonition in her mother's very red ear and danced back into the parlor.

"Maw'll be here in just a minute, Mr. Sarpy. She's always readin'."

Presently Mrs. Pope hove in. She rattled when she walked, and after you had regarded her for a bit the large white spots on her black gown began to magnify and rotate until the gift of sight became a curse.

"Maw, I want to make you acquainted with my friend Mr. Sarpy."

"Pleased to meet you, maw." Mr. Sarpy bowed to a careful angle.

"Pleased to meet you, sir. Nice weather, ain't it?"

"It is that," carefully reseating himself.

"Maw says you work at the Biggest store too."

"Yes, maw; I'm in the aisle adjoining to the books."

"Well, well, so books is your special